

# RADIO PROPAGANDA REPORT



BEHAVIOR OF THE SOVIET CENTRAL PRESS DURING THE CUBAN CRISIS

(23 - 29 OCTOBER)

A supplement to the documentary record presented  
in Radio Propaganda Report CD. 214 of 30 October  
1962, "Chronicle of Soviet Propaganda on the Cu-  
ban Crisis"

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This report examines the behavior of the Soviet central newspapers during the week of the Cuban crisis. It thus fills out the documentary record presented in Radio Propaganda Report CD. 214 of 30 October 1962, "Chronicle of Soviet Propaganda on the Cuban Crisis."

CD. 214, based on Radio Moscow and TASS, treated the reactions of Soviet propaganda as a whole, including the press as reflected in broadcasts of newspaper materials and radio reviews of the press. The findings of this report confirm that TASS and Radio Moscow provided an accurate reflection of the central press during this period--a period when the vast, integrated Soviet propaganda machine, caught up in a fast-moving situation in which the regime's own moves were reactive, could resort to little more than a holding action.

This report, therefore, may be read as an adjunct to the earlier Chronicle of Soviet Propaganda. It overlaps the earlier report to some extent, in order to place the content of the major Soviet newspapers against the background of related developments.

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BEHAVIOR OF THE SOVIET CENTRAL PRESS DURING THE CUBAN CRISIS

(23 - 29 OCTOBER)

23 OCTOBER: INITIAL REACTIONSCENTRAL PRESS  
MARKS TIME

On 23 October, Muscovites had to rely exclusively on the radio for the latest news about the Cuban crisis. The major Moscow newspapers, having gone to press before the release of the Soviet Government statement at 1600 hours Moscow time, responded to the absence of authoritative editorial guidance by limiting their coverage of Cuban affairs largely to abbreviated TASS dispatches from New York and Washington which had been broadcast the day before. Drawn from U.S. press reports, these dispatches reported the "feverish" weekend activity in Washington official circles, the military buildup in Florida, and the convergence of U.S. naval and air forces in the Caribbean area, but drew no firm conclusions about the immediate purposes of these activities.

Thus a widely published TASS dispatch from New York reported the following comment of a New York HERALD TRIBUNE correspondent: "Either something serious is being cooked up or the Kennedy administration wants to create an impression that something is being cooked up." The remainder of the dispatch offered no solution of the riddle posed by the title of the TRIBUNE article, "Something is Cooking in Washington: Berlin or Cuba?" A PRAVDA "International Review" echoed the news from Washington and the Caribbean in a highly agitated vein, but there was little other indication in the central press that Moscow anticipated the onset of a major international crisis.

OFFICIAL AND  
QUASI-OFFICIAL  
ACTIONS

Soviet radio listeners on the 23d heard about moves taken at the diplomatic and military levels in response to the U.S. "provocative actions." In addition to transmitting the Soviet Government statement to Ambassador Kohler, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov, acting in Gromyko's absence, briefed the ambassadors of "the socialist countries" on the Soviet Government statement and informed them of the Soviet intention to place the issue of the U.S. "threat to peace" immediately before the U.N. Security Council. Following a report to his government on the state of readiness of the armed forces, Defense Minister Malinovskiy received instructions to defer the discharge of senior age groups in the strategic rocket and antiaircraft forces and in the submarine fleet, cancel all military leaves, and raise the

preparedness and vigilance of the armed forces. Similarly, Warsaw Pact Commander Marshal Grechko, after conferring with Pact representatives in Moscow, issued instructions "to raise the military readiness of the troops and fleets" under his command.

The broadcasting of the Soviet Government statement touched off the first of the series of "spontaneous" protest meetings that were to continue all week throughout the USSR.

To allay public fears and anxieties over the threatening turn of events, the Soviet leaders participated in a number of well-publicized activities on the 23d. A delegation of Rumanian leaders returning from Southeast Asia via Moscow was met at Vnukovo airport by Presidium members Brezhnev, Kozlov, and Kosygin. The Rumanians were later feted at a Kremlin dinner attended by all the full members of the Presidium except Kuusinen, Podgorny, and Voronov. In keeping with this posture of outward composure, most of the Soviet leaders, including Khrushchev, then accompanied the Rumanians to the Bolshoi theater where they witnessed a lengthy performance of "Boris Godunov" starring the American Jerome Hines. Earlier in the day Brezhnev and Kosygin had met separately with the Chinese Ambassador on the eve of his departure from the Soviet Union.

24 OCTOBER: THE "SERIOUS WARNING" TO THE UNITED STATES

EDITORIAL TREATMENT All the major Moscow papers on 24 October carried the Soviet Government statement, but only three of them--PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA, and RED STAR--published supporting editorials. The arguments advanced in these editorials remained, for the most part, well within the framework of the statement which had addressed a "serious warning" to the United States but had not specified any forceful countermeasures against the U.S. quarantine. Like the statement itself, the editorials uniformly sought to maximize the "aggressive" intentions of "American imperialism," while at the same time minimizing the nature and extent of Soviet military involvement in Cuba.

Without revealing any of the particulars contained in the President's accusations about Soviet missile bases in Cuba, the PRAVDA and IZVESTIYA editorials ridiculed the notion that Cuba could possibly constitute a "threat to the Western Hemisphere," insisting instead that the charge was merely a pretext for a policy of "cowardly plunder." This theme was to become a staple in Soviet propaganda during the week of crisis. Echoing the Soviet Government statement, PRAVDA asserted that the U.S. actions were incompatible with the principles of the U.N. Charter, and it stressed the "special responsibility" that "rests with the United Nations in the developing situation."

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RED STAR also adhered to the text of the Soviet Government statement in insisting that Soviet aid to Cuba was "intended exclusively for defensive purposes." But the organ of the Defense Ministry went on to call the demand that Soviet military equipment be removed from Cuba "the limit of impudence"--a tougher stand than that taken in the Soviet Government statement. In defense of this position, RED STAR, alone among the three newspapers, called attention to the presence of U.S. troops and bases around the world, "particularly in those countries situated in direct proximity to the Soviet Union." Observing that the United States had rejected Soviet proposals to remove all troops from foreign countries and liquidate foreign military bases, RED STAR asserted that the United States had no "right" to oppose Soviet military aid for Cuba's defense. Despite the concern evidenced by RED STAR over the issue of U.S. bases, it is noteworthy that this theme never became the focal point of a concerted propaganda campaign during the week of crisis.

NEWS COVERAGE  
AND PRESS COM-  
MENTARY

The bulk of the news coverage on the Cuban situation in the central press, as on the radio, was devoted to reports from foreign capitals alleging widespread public anxiety over and disapproval of the U.S. action and accounts of domestic protest meetings and popular demonstrations. Letters and resolutions from workers, peasants, and intellectuals denouncing the "provocative," "piratical," and "aggressive" actions of the "atomic maniacs" in Washington littered the back pages of the central newspapers, along with strident pledges of increased vigilance and readiness emanating from military installations and naval units. The sentiments credited to Soviet citizens in these reports were indistinguishable from those enunciated during earlier periods of heightened international tension and, as a rule, they cast more heat than light on the official posture of the regime.

From the outset the central press followed a policy of strict censorship of the President's disclosures about the presence of Soviet missile bases in Cuba. The sole account of the President's speech--a 250-word TASS dispatch published in all the Moscow papers except RED STAR--gave the bare outlines of the measures announced by the President: the establishment of a quarantine "on all types of offensive weapons being conveyed to Cuba"; the evacuation of the families of servicemen on Guantanamo; the reinforcements sent there; and the surveillance of Cuban military potential. Without mentioning the Soviet rockets, TASS reported that "the President justified these measures by saying that Cuba has been transformed into an 'important strategic base' of the Soviet Union." This was the same item Radio Moscow had broadcast in the domestic service just prior to the release of the Soviet Government statement. Subsequent commentaries in the central press, as on the radio, were so phrased as to impugn the veracity of the President's "allegations" without denying them unequivocally.

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OFFICIAL  
ACTIONS

In the face of mounting indications of popular anxiety, the leadership continued to maintain an official facade of business as usual. The Foreign Ministry's refusal to accept the President's quarantine proclamation and the outbreak of a minor student demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy did not prevent Khrushchev and Kosygin from having separate talks with Westinghouse Electric's Vice President William Knox--talks reported in the central press to have taken place in a "friendly" atmosphere.

The same trio of Presidium members who had greeted the Rumanian leaders on their arrival in Moscow on the 23d now saw the Rumanians off at Vnukovo. No Presidium members, however, attended the departure of the CPR Ambassador on the same day.

25 OCTOBER: PROPAGANDA AS USUALEDITORIAL  
TREATMENT

Of the five editorials published in the central press on 25 October, only those in RED STAR, TRUD, and RURAL LIFE were concerned with the Cuban crisis. The PRAVDA and IZVESTIYA editorials related to the Sino-Indian dispute and the domestic economy, respectively. The three editorials on Cuba, though couched in the familiar declamatory jargon of Soviet propaganda, did not venture beyond generalized warnings that the USSR would do everything necessary for the defense of Cuba. As indicated by their stereotyped titles (RED STAR's "Voice of Wrath," TRUD's "Wrath of Millions," and RURAL LIFE's "Wrath of the Soviet Peasantry"), the editorials were primarily agitational in character, providing no new policy guidelines.

NEWS COVERAGE  
AND PRESS COM-  
MENTARY

The texts of the Khrushchev-Russell exchanges were featured without comment on the front pages of most of the Moscow papers. A number of lengthy TASS dispatches from New York on the Security Council session of 23 October were also given prominent play. Although these dispatches presented a completely distorted account of the proceedings, they indirectly provided domestic readers with more details about the U.S. charges against the Soviet Union than had been made available earlier. For example, the TASS account of Zorin's speech indicated that he had exposed the "thesis about certain 'irrefutable proof' of the presence of Soviet rocket bases in Cuba"--a "thesis" not previously spelled out in the press. Whatever else the report of Zorin's "exposure" accomplished, it at least offered Muscovites accustomed to reading between the lines a partial glimpse at the real issues in dispute between the United States and the USSR.

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Whi's continuing to recount manifestations of popular support at home and abroad, the central press began to broaden its coverage to include reports of official support from communist regimes in Europe and Asia. Official declarations of support from Prague, Sofia, Budapest, and Ulan Bator were reported by TASS.

At the same time, articles by prominent Soviet journalists and scholars as well as speeches and articles by Soviet military leaders began to appear in the central press, the former extolling in moralistic and legalistic terms the virtues of the Soviet stand, the latter recounting in material terms the components of Soviet military power:

4 In the first category, an article by IZVESTIYA commentator N. Polyanov coupled affirmations of Cuba's "right" to an independent destiny with references to Cuba's "powerful friends."

4 In the latter category, RED STAK published an abbreviated version of a speech by Marshal Malinovskiy delivered at a "recent" conference on political indoctrination in the armed forces. Malinovskiy's speech, which was evidently made before the outbreak of the Cuban crisis, listed the achievements of Soviet military technology and doctrine in a manner calculated to project an image of "indestructible battle capacity" and a "high state of readiness." While implying a somewhat more advanced stage of development of antimissile defenses than that conveyed in earlier Soviet pronouncements, the speech did not go beyond a figurative flexing of Soviet military capabilities.

A dispatch from Washington by PRAVDA correspondent Sergey Vishnevskiy warned against the possibility of further U.S. action against Cuba. Vishnevskiy cited a New York HERALD TRIBUNE article, based on opinion among "well-informed" Congressional circles, that if Cuba did not submit to the U.S. demands, "the invasion order could be given in the course of several days." Although Vishnevskiy admitted the difficulty of confirming the report, he called attention to "the feverish development of aggressive preparations on bases aimed at the Isle of Freedom."

OFFICIAL ACTIONS The Soviet leaders were apparently too preoccupied with official concerns to participate in public appearances on 25 October. None were reported in the Soviet press.

26 OCTOBER: THE APPEAL TO "REASON"

EDITORIAL TREATMENT PRAVDA was the only major Moscow paper to publish an editorial on the Cuban crisis on 26 October, and it was not until five days later that the subject was again treated editorially anywhere in the central press. The PRAVDA

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editorial, entitled "Reason Must Triumph," consisted mainly of a summary of worldwide reactions to the international crisis and a reiteration of the proposals for high-level negotiations contained in the Soviet draft U.N. resolution and Khrushchev's reply to Bertrand Russell. PRAVDA also charged that the threat to peace emanated not from "the allegations of American propaganda about a 'Cuban threat,'" but from the concentration of U.S. forces around Cuba and the network of U.S. military bases around half the world.

Pointing to Khrushchev's favorable response to U Thant's call for a voluntary suspension of arms shipments to Cuba, PRAVDA called upon the U.S. Government to "heed the voice of reason." Washington "must realize," PRAVDA went on, "that the situation, aggravated to the extreme, can push the world into the abyss of war."

NEWS COVERAGE  
AND PRESS COM-  
MENTARY

The pattern of news coverage on the Cuban situation remained unaltered on 26 October. The central press featured the texts of the first Khrushchev-U Thant exchange, along with roundups of foreign and domestic praise of Khrushchev's reply to Bertrand Russell. TASS dispatches from Peking, Warsaw, Bucharest, and Pyongyang reported the official declarations in support of the Soviet Government statement. News items on protest meetings and demonstrations continued to pour in from foreign capitals and Soviet provincial centers.

Articles recounting the psychological and military preparations in the United States for armed intervention against Cuba continued to appear in the central press. PRAVDA correspondents Zhukov and Mayevskiy, writing from Andover, Massachusetts, asserted that an "unbridled" hate campaign against Cuba had been launched in the United States, and they warned against any underestimation of the "unprecedented hysterical military clamor" which had "descended upon the USA like a hurricane."

A RED STAR "Observer" article, entitled "Cuba is Not Alone," pointed to an imminent danger of a U.S. invasion of Cuba. It maintained that the plans worked out by the Pentagon included the use of regular U.S. troops in such an undertaking. Without indicating any specific Soviet counter-measures against such an eventuality, RED STAR explicitly denounced a policy of appeasement in the following terms:

History teaches that it is impossible to indulge brigands.  
The policy of appeasing the aggressor has always led to tragic consequences for the people.

This passage was not included in TASS' brief reviews of the RED STAR article, although TASS accurately conveyed the tenor of the article.

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A PRAVDA commentary by V. Korichev picked up the theme of U.S. military bases abroad. It sought to contrast the arms acquired by Cuba "for defensive purposes and only for these purposes" with the "bases of aggression" established by the United States all over the globe. "if the U.S. Government really seeks peace," the article inquired, "then why should it not accept the proposal which the Soviet Union has been making for a number of years--the liquidation of all foreign military bases on all foreign territories?"

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS** On 26 October the Soviet leaders resumed their public appearances. Brezhnev met the Syrian ambassador in the Kremlin, and Khrushchev met separately with the Indian Minister of Minerals and Fuel and the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister. Later that evening Khrushchev and Polyanskiy, joined by their wives, accompanied Brezhnev, Kozlov, and Shvernik at a concert of the Cuban "Bocuccos" orchestra.

27 OCTOBER: EXPOSURE OF "FAKED PHOTOGRAPHS"

**EDITORIAL TREATMENT** On 27 October the editorials in the central press focused attention on domestic problems: PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA, and SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA were concerned with agriculture, RED STAR with indoctrination in the armed forces, TRUD with trade union activity.

**NEWS COVERAGE AND PRESS COMMENTARY** In the absence of any new diplomatic overtures--there was no Soviet acknowledgment of Khrushchev's 26 October letter to the President--the central press remained on its previously established course. The familiar letters of protest, declarations of support, and calls for increased vigilance were accompanied by new exposés of U.S. intentions. A TASS dispatch from New York published in RED STAR reported Lincoln White's statement that "'further actions will be justified' if aggressive military preparations in Cuba continue." The theme was echoed in a PRAVDA dispatch from New York by Viktor Mayevskiy. He reported that among U.S. journalists the view was widespread that the Cuban affair would not be limited to a blockade and that preparations for direct intervention were continuing.

The central press also sought belatedly to discredit as "fakes" the photographs of Soviet rockets in Cuba displayed by Ambassador Stevenson at the Security Council session of 25 October.\* The TASS accounts of

\* The Soviet domestic radio service had referred to the Defense Department's "faked" photographs as early as 23 October

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the session, published in PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA, SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, and TRUD on the 27th, dismissed the photographs as CIA fabrications and charged that Stevenson's "pathetic performance" was only a duplication of an earlier abortive episode in which the Ambassador's allegations were subsequently discredited by the U.S. press. An article in SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA by correspondent A. Borisov sought to ridicule the "fakes fabricated by the Pentagon" by pointing to the embarrassment experienced by an unidentified Pentagon spokesman when confronted with earlier categorical denials by the Defense Department regarding the presence of offensive weapons in Cuba.

A RED STAR article by Leontyev returned to the theme of the U.S. bases. Noting that the United States had demanded the removal of Soviet military equipment from Cuba, Leontyev raised the question: "Why should not American military equipment and troops be removed from the hundreds of military bases situated around the Soviet Union? To the argument that Cuba was "very near" the United States, he retorted: "What about the American bases close to the borders of the Soviet Union?" Why does the United States, he continued, have the only right to demand the liquidation of foreign bases?

A TASS dispatch from Washington carried the first report in the central press on the progress of shipping in the Caribbean Sea. It stated that two U.S. destroyers had stopped the Lebanese freighter Marucla en route to Cuba, discovered no "forbidden materials" aboard, and permitted the vessel to proceed. The vessel, it was reported, was found to be carrying trucks, spare parts, sulfur, and paper.

OFFICIAL ACTIONS      Mass demonstrations were organized in front of the U.S. and Cuban Embassies in Moscow. The Soviet leaders, however, made no public appearances on 27 October.

28 OCTOBER: "AN IMPORTANT INITIATIVE"

NEWS COVERAGE      Khrushchev's 27 October letter to the President, AND PRESS COMMENTARY containing the offer to eliminate the Soviet missile bases in Cuba in return for the removal of U.S. missile bases in Turkey, was given front-page treatment in all the central papers, along with the Premier's latest round of exchanges with U Thant. Under such headlines as "An Important Initiative," "New Proof of the Goodwill of the USSR," and "Proof of Prudence and Self-Restraint," the central press reported favorable reactions at home and abroad to the Khrushchev letter.

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In support of the bases-exchange proposal, PRAVDA reprinted a map from the New York TIMES denoting the worldwide network of U.S. military bases. The map was accompanied by a country-to-country rundown on the bases drawn from various U.S. publications. An article by V. Matveyev in IZVESTIYA also took up the issue of "Cuba and the Bases of the USA"-- but it was less than effective as support for Khrushchev's proposal, in that it ridiculed a similar proposal raised in an earlier New York TIMES article that Cuba be disarmed by the USSR in exchange for the dismantling of some U.S. base near the Soviet Union.

The press on 28 October continued to report menacing moves being planned by Washington. A widely published TASS dispatch from New York, entitled "The Pentagon Is Preparing a New Adventure," reported that officials in the White House, the State Department, and the Defense Department "have begun to warn about possible new U.S. moves" against Cuba. According to a dispatch from Washington by PRAVDA correspondent Vishnevskiy, the Kennedy administration was seriously considering the possibility of invading the "Isle of Freedom."

OFFICIAL ACTIONS      On 28 October seven Presidium members--Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyanskiy, Suslov, and Khrushchev-- attended a Kremlin performance by a group of Bulgarian actors.

29 OCTOBER: NO COMMENT ON KHRUSHCHEV-KENNEDY EXCHANGE

NEWS COVERAGE      PRAVDA--the only central paper published on Mondays-- AND PRESS COMMENTARY carried the texts of Khrushchev's 28 October letters to the President and U Thant. Also published in this issue were the President's statement welcoming Khrushchev's move and the President's earlier letter of the 27th in reply to Khrushchev's letter of 26 October, which neither the Soviet press nor radio had previously mentioned. Castro's 28 October statement advancing his five conditions--including the return of Guantanamo--for the settlement of the crisis was also published, without comment.

The commentary on Khrushchev's 28 October message was limited to a brief front-page notice that it had been met with "deep satisfaction and unanimous approval" by the Soviet people. PRAVDA also carried a brief item reporting that the "peoples of all the socialist states" had welcomed Khrushchev's letters of both 27 and 28 October.

OFFICIAL ACTIONS      A delegation of Czech party leaders was met at Vnukovo airport by Presidium members Brezhnev, Kozlov, and Kosygin.